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PHOTOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION MEMORANDUM



NEW CHINESE COASTAL OILERS NORTH VIETNAM

Declass Review by NIMA/DOD

NPIC/R-92/69
OCTOBER 1969

GROUP 1 EXCLUDED FROM
AUTOMATIC DOWNGRADING
AND DECLASSIFICATION

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WARNING

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New Coastal Oilers in North Vietnam

The North Vietnamese have acquired new Chinese-built coastal oilers (AO), which will increase their capability to deliver POL southward along the coast and inland waterways.

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This type of vessel was first observed in Haiphong on [REDACTED] and was observed off-loading POL at the Quang Khe Transshipment Point a week later. Since then, at least 14 of these new vessels have been confirmed in North Vietnam.

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Photography of [REDACTED] revealed at least six of the AO version and seven similar vessels operating in the vicinity of Haiphong. Several have been modified for dry cargo and as possible special liquid carriers.

The vessel is steel hulled with a counter stern, superstructure aft. Its length overall (LOA) is 90 feet, its beam is [REDACTED], its probable dead weight tonnage (DWT) is approximately 300 tons, and its probable speed is 12-16 knots.

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The aft third of the vessel has a raised portion (possibly to protect the deckhouse) which slants upward from deck level to approximately the height of the deckhouse. The vessel has four filler caps, a probable pumping unit, and at least two sections of removable railing which permit the POL hose to lie flat during loading and off-loading operations. The aft third of the vessel is generally canvas covered, but as much as three quarters of the oiler has been observed canvas covered.

A communications mast is mounted directly in front of the deckhouse of the vessel, but no radar or radar-associated equipment has been observed. A second mast-like tube is located amidship and, although its function has not yet been determined, it is probably an air vent.

The acquisition of these vessels seems to climax a series of changes affecting the maritime delivery of POL to the south. Previously, bulk POL was towed southward along the coast in POL barges pulled by the North Vietnamese oceangoing tugboat "Bach Dang" and other vessels of similar size.

However, the North Vietnamese lacked sufficient vessels capable of towing large numbers of POL barges with bulk petroleum. Consequently, shipments of POL to the southern areas were delivered by drums shipped on the type 46/47 cargo coasters and North Vietnam's merchant vessels.

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Later observations confirm the use of type 46/47 coasters modified for use as bulk carriers. The converted carriers have a speed of approximately 15 knots as compared to the much slower speeds of the towed barges.

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Photography indicates that carriers used in the southern coastal areas have been the new Chinese Communist tankers.

NPIC Project 172002NE

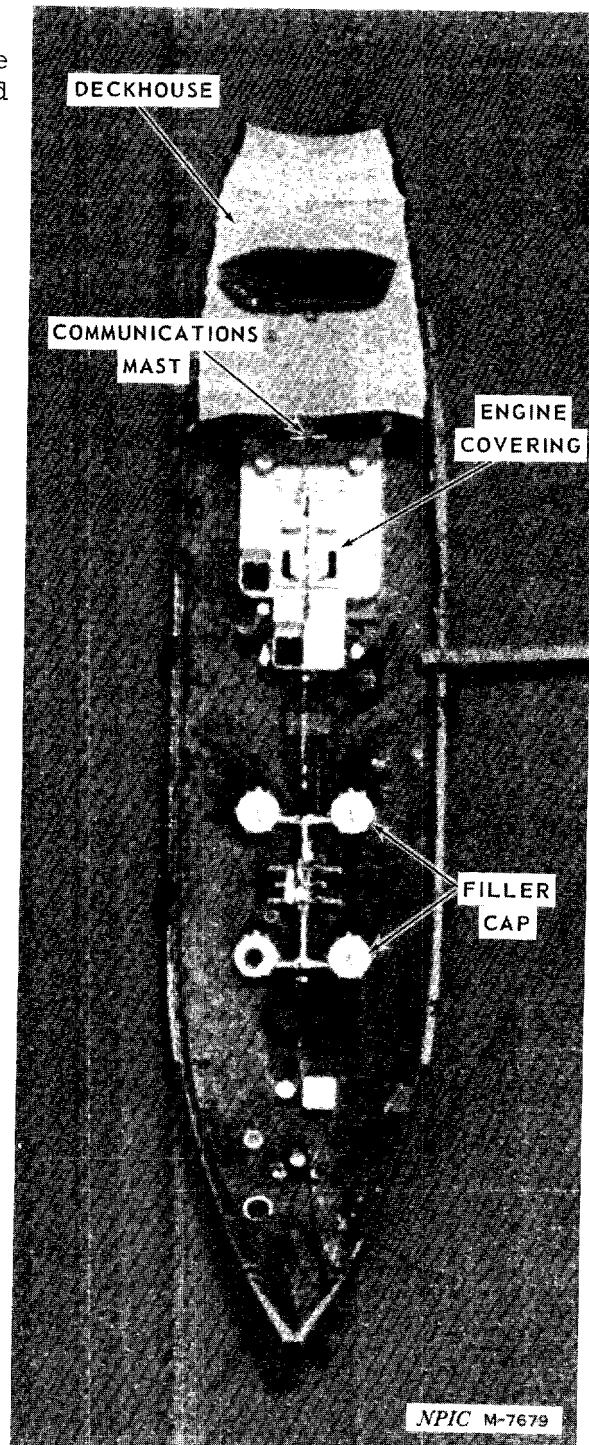
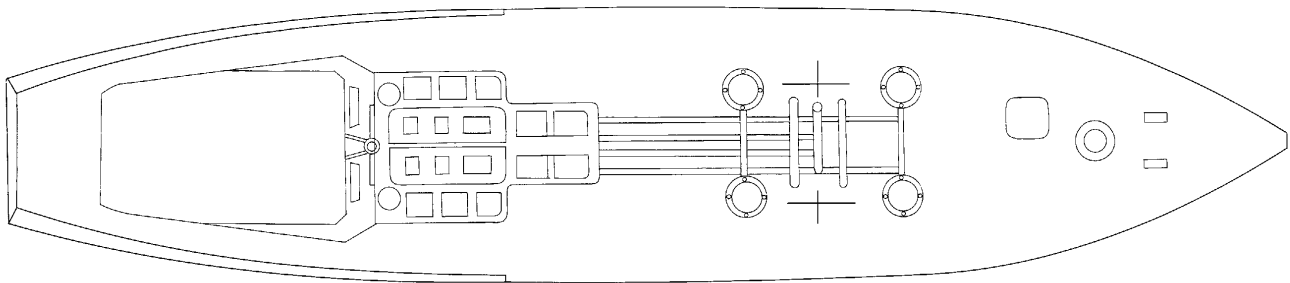


FIGURE 1. NEW COASTAL OILER,
NORTH VIETNAM

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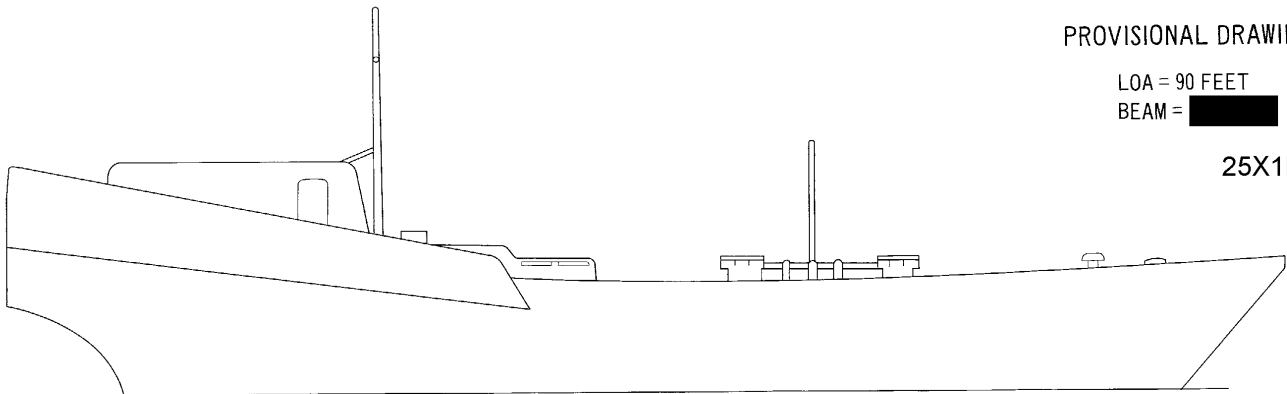


PROVISIONAL DRAWING

LOA = 90 FEET

BEAM = [REDACTED]

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